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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S POLITICAL SITUATION, CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage September 7 on President Chen Shui-bian's transit of Guam and return to Taiwan Wednesday; former DPP Chairman Shih Ming-teh's campaign to unseat President Chen; the KMT's plan to push legislation of anti-graft laws; a local mail bomb case; and the birth of Japan's new prince. The pro-unification "United Daily News" ran a front-page banner headline that read "Bian Was Secretly Questioned in State Affairs Fund Case." With regard to U.S. arms procurements, the pro-status quo "China Times" ran an exclusive story on page six with the headline "United States Has for First Time Given Green Light to Selling Taiwan JDAM Precision-guided Munitions." The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, also ran a banner headline on page four that said "66 F-16s Will All Be Assembled in Taiwan."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "Liberty Times" editorial urged the Legislative Yuan to quickly pass or revise relevant sunshine laws in order to eradicate and punish corruption. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" discussed the possible visit to Taiwan by China's Taiwan Affairs Office Director Chen Yunlin. The article said "no one should harbor any illusions over the grave potential for sabotage that underlies the liberalization of cross-strait ties." End summary.

¶3. Taiwan's Political Situation

"Pass Sunshine Laws as Early as Possible to Remove Gray Areas in Laws"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (9/7):

"... Perhaps President Chen's clarification of and counterattacks at some of the accusations against him would not be able to win recognition of those who criticized him. They nonetheless highlight the fact that Taiwan society is full of double standards, and that people tend to judge things from their own political stances, ideologies, and ethnic consciousness. There seems to be a need for an objective system or laws that can serve as norms which are applicable everywhere. ...

"The origin of these contentions lies in the fact that during the process when Taiwan was transformed from an authoritarian system to democracy, it failed to establish a sound legal system, such as legislation of sunshine laws, to serve as a corresponding measure for democracy. [Such a deficiency] has thus created some historical problems, like the KMT's ill-gotten party assets, and some new controversies, like the state affairs funds, the allowances for government agency heads, and the assets reports for public

functionary. The loopholes in the regulations have, in particular, resulted in serious confrontations in Taiwan's current political situation. Thus, the best way to remove the ultimate cause of trouble is to legislate or revise relevant sunshine laws, make them more comprehensive and avoid any gray or ambiguous areas in the laws, so that they can thoroughly eradicate and punish graft and create a clean political culture and climate. ..."

14. Cross-Strait Relations

"Chen Yunlin, a Trojan Envoy"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (9/7):

"The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) has applied for permission for China's Taiwan Affairs Office Director Chen Yunlin to attend its 'cross-strait agricultural cooperation' forum next month in Taipei. The KMT has accused the Mainland Affairs Council of obstructing Chen's visit, while council officials say the government has been dealing with the issue according to the law, and that it has not attempted to block Chen from visiting. ...

"If China is so eager to 'normalize, regularize and stabilize cross-strait economic relations,' as Chen himself was quoted as saying during the KMT-CCP forum, then why does Beijing not immediately engage in dialogue with Taipei? Few oppose cross-strait economic exchanges and trade in principle. But no one should harbor any illusions over the grave potential for sabotage that underlines the liberalization of cross-strait ties. ... If Chen's visit is going to be just another cog in the Chinese machinery of manipulation and veiled threats, then he is not welcome. If his appearance at the KMT's forum next month is going to be just another transparent attack on the national interest under the ruse of 'benefiting Taiwan's farmers,' then he should forget about ever coming here - so long as this nation harbors any self-respect."

YOUNG